562 inevitably leave the community, she can never claim any
583 authority. Thus condemned to perpetual powerlessness, a woman never has the right to any position other than an inferior one in native society. Motives based on interest or affection may modify her situation more or less to her advantage, but they will not change her basic rights, which are at the root of all disputes about women, between spouses or between communities.

II. The Community of Property

421 What is the property of which the patrimony is composed?

It is impossible to provide a detailed list, which would, in any case, be endless. Nor should we limit ourselves to the definitions of our legal system, which are too narrow. From the native point of view, patrimonial property [187] may be divided into three principal categories.

[TIC] First, there are the gods; the manes, or souls of the ancestral protectors of the family; and the nyana; the gods created by the magician. Some of them protect only the community, while others are also concerned with other collectivities. Finally, there are the innumerable magic weapons, which are gods of a sort. In the discussion of the duties of the fa, I spoke of these gods, and they are also mentioned in other parts of this work.

421 A second category of property is made up of the recipro-
● 424 cal rights of the community and its members, on the one hand, and of the community and similar collectivities, on the other. I have just explained the first, and the second will be dealt with later in the chapter under the heading "Relations between Communities."

421 Finally, all the things that are particularly valued make
422 up the third category: gold; cattle and sheep; grain; agricul-
423 tural, industrial, and commercial products of all kinds; dwellings; etc. Three points related to this last category require special consideration: agrarian usufruct, conjugal usufruct, and slaves.

421 Finally, the status of a community is, as it were, syn-
424 thesized and symbolized by the "honorable name" (dyamu), by
596 which this collectivity titles itself and which it considers one of
614 its most precious possessions.

Agrarian usufruct. Ownership of land does not exist.
423 Each family has a right of use, uncertain in principle but permanent in fact, over the lands assigned to it in the domain of the genie-protector (nyana dugu-da-siri).

It may happen that a single family is the sole beneficiary of a given domain because it is the only one linked to the genie protecting the place.

More generally, various families are under the protection of the same local genie, whose domain in that case includes the parts exploited in common as well as the fields expressly assigned to individual families under its protection. The agrarian usufruct which is included as part of the community property exists with respect to these individual fields.

This usufruct differs from that recognized by our law. It is the dugu-tigi and his council who allot the common lands, and the process always involves wrangling and [187] deals. In principle, the plot assigned remains indefinitely with the family benefited if it is continuously farmed and an annual fee is paid. Following the land for several years is permitted. The family exploiting the land may use it in any way, and its right is as complete as possible, short only of alienating it. The family may lease, cede, or pawn its usufruct. If a transaction involves a foreigner, however, it may not be concluded without the consent of the dugu-tigi, who consults his council. In general, any action which might conceivably injure the welfare of the community as a whole must be submitted to the dugu-tigi for approval before being undertaken.

The usufruct comes to an end under the following circumstances: when a family permanently leaves the community governing the fields; when the dugu-tigi and his council decide to dispose of the land for reasons which they are not required to give; when a family gives the land up voluntarily or has been deprived of it because it has been used in a manner contrary to the interests of the agrarian community.